

REPORT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

FOR THE SUMMER - 1944

During the summer months the Industrial Department was in full operation with no vacations intervening. The largest part of time was consumed by counselling demands; plant visits were of equal importance, greater significance, but of less frequency. Job placements were few compared to pre-war summer months. Three specialized industrial studies were made of (1) conditions in twenty foundries, (2) one small factory, and (3) department stores. Work was begun on problems presented by the returning discharged soldiers, the interest of the Industrial Secretary has been drawn toward the retraining and re-employment administration of the Office of War Mobilization. This latter program is one to re-integrate veterans into their former jobs and otherwise rehabilitate them.

The amount of comparable time spent on the several jobs done by the Industrial Secretary, reflects the important industrial trends during the past three months. A great deal of counselling was required because of the types of job-applicants and the types of problems they faced. With many "floaters" (persons floating from one job to another) seeking work, one-contact counselling was necessary to stimulate some stability and maturity in appreciation of responsibility to the individual, his job, and his affiliated relationships.

The program of counselling with top management in industrial plants shows that plant officials are not able to commit themselves as to how they will meet their manpower problems during and after the reconversion period; nor do they know yet just what their over-all operation picture will be. It is a fact that all plants are trying to determine a post-war market and product for the best future of those plants. Some plants will return to the same kind of products made by them prior to the war; some others are developing additional products; a smaller number of plants will go into manufacturing products totally new to them. The importance of this is that we may definitely expect widespread dislocation of workers, Negro and White. It is a fact that the outlook for uninterrupted employment of large numbers of Negroes is very bad. A larger number of Negro workers than of white workers will be without jobs because of seniority regulations. We may expect discharged soldiers to return to their old jobs without loss of seniority, status and/or pay; but Negro veterans will find in more instances that White veterans that their old jobs will no longer exist because many job classifications during war production were only temporary. Plants that employed almost 100% White help before the war, will tend to return to that picture since those employees who left for the Armed Forces have the status of "permanent employee". Those workers beginning work during the war period replacing employees who went into the Armed Forces have the status of first, second, (etc) temporary employee. Permanent employees have first claim on jobs as long as there are any jobs of similar status, and/or pay available in the plants they left to enter the service. This means that we should prepare for a hard task of stimulating employers to keep Negro workers wherever possible; to rehire those displaced by veterans, as soon as possible; and to hire other Negro workers at all the levels of employment instead of returning to or continuing the too frequent practice of hiring Negroes for only lowered categories of work.

A cooperative arrangement was achieved with the United States Employment Service whereby we have the authority to refer job applicants to any plant in the Newark area, with full observance of War Manpower Commission rules and regulations regarding manpower and plant priorities. Referrals totaled 96, between June 1st and August 31st. Applicants needing counselling services brought such interviews to a total of 130 for the same three months. The total of both referral and guidance interviews was 226. The average

interview is one hour long, which shows us that 3.424 hours per working day were spent in visits to individuals or groups having to do with industrial problems. A larger amount of work of the latter categories is going to be needed to make the best contribution toward making employment as possible for Negroes as for Whites and possible for both groups, in the reconversion and later post-war periods.

In the domestic field, the domestic placement clerk reports a total of 151 referrals from May to September. Of that total 9 were permanent workers, 6 part-time, and the rest were day workers.

In connection with discharged soldiers, the Industrial Secretary has reached all of the 21 Re-employment Committeemen attached to 21 Draft Boards in Newark. Some commotion was created because we raised a question as to how effective their program will be for Negroes as well as white veterans. From Trenton, we received a letter from the Deputy Director of the State Headquarters for Selective Service, which he wished to be a "collective reply" from the 21 committeemen in Newark. This was the opening of what it seems will be a real job to have machinery developed in the Veteran program, that will be able to adequately service the needs of Veterans regardless of race, color, or creed.

Material is being compiled which we saw as necessary in April, that will give us factual data on the position of the Negro worker in industry-before the war and at the present time - so that we are able to plot the course of problems after the war and know how we may best help to solve them. This data comes from authoritative news releases, various governmental and private agencies, and industrial plant officials.